722 Hitler started his Blitzkrieg against the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, picking in the first few weeks rapid and easy victories. Then the front was drawn in central Estonia, along the Emajõgi River through Viljandi and Pärnu. This gave the Communists time to carry out their mobilization in northern Estonia and to ship men to the Soviet Union. The 33,000 mobilized men from northern Estonia were taken to timber camps in the northern USSR, where the majority of them died from ill treatment, inhuman working conditions and undernourishment. An Estonian corps was organized of the survivors in 1942.

725 Already at the outbreak of the war Estonian men who had sought refuge in forests formed partisan troops, called "Forest Brothers," who later played quite an important role in the war operations, helping to drive out the Soviets

725 from Estonia. Three battalions of self-defense units participated in the liberation of Tallinn on August 28, 1941. One of these units was formed in Finland of Estonian men who had succeeded in escaping across the Gulf of Finland from the Communists; these men parachuted behind the Soviet lines and excelled in courage and skill in warfare. The code name of the unit was Erna.

Many young Estonians volunteered with the German East Battalions to take revenge for the cruelties and deportations. When they later tried to leave the Wehrmacht, disappointed because the Germans did not restore Estonian independence, they were not allowed to do so, and they refused to join the Estonian Legion founded by the Germans in 1942. In 1944 they were compulsorily joined to the Waffen SS. Under these circumstances the Estonian men

725 started to desert and to escape again across the Gulf of Finland.

727 642 During the German occupation Estonia was ruled by a Governor-General (Generalkommissar) and by provincial governors in each county. An Estonian puppet government was also appointed, headed by Dr. Hjalmar Mäe, which, however, lacked the confidence of the Estonian people.

668 [643] Estonian patriots, under the leadership of Professor Jüri Uluots, the last Prime Minister, tried everything to restore Estonian independence. But the Germans did not grant independence to any conquered nation, and so gradually an underground resistance movement grew in all the conquered countries. Resistance cells were working underground also in Estonia.[1] The Gestapo discovered them and arrested many

[1] [For wartime partisans see cat 116, pp 66-68 - Analyst]

721 Estonian capital. In that emergency the demoralized German Wehrmacht was no longer able
[643] to defend Estonia. Professor Uluots made the decision then[1] to support the mobilization in Estonia which the Germans had announced, and his proclamation effected the registration of 45,000 men. Although Estonian regiments were poorly equipped, they knew what was at stake; for several months they held the front, making it possible for many thousands of Estonians to escape to the West. After Finland was forced to accept the Soviet armistice on September 4, 1944, the Russians turned all their strength to the Baltic and rolled over it in a few weeks. On September
721 725 22, 1944, Tallinn fell. The Estonian units, formed at the end of the German occupation, were cut off from retreat and the majority of them became again undercover "Forest Brothers."[2] Refugees

1 [March 9, 1944; see cat. 116, p. 69 -- Analyst]
2 [See cat. 116, pp. 66-67 -- Analyst]

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from Estonia tell that armed resistance continued in Estonia through 1946. In the winter of 1946-47 large-scale "tactial maneuvers" were organized and the forests along Lake Peipus and in Alutaguse, Virumaa, as well as in Pärnumaa and Võrumaa were combed. These operations broke the large-scale resistance of the Forest Brothers.

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The Second Soviet Occupation continued where the first had ended, only the Soviets were now much more self-confident and violent and they had more time. Everything that even slightly resembled the Western economic and cultural systems had to be changed to match the USSR's Estonian agriculture was collectivized with the help of a large-scale mass deportation in March, 1949. Without such measures of terror the Soviets could not break the resistance of the